# A DISCOURSE OF THE Divine Omnipresence AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, Delivered in a SERMON BEFORE The Honourable SOCIETY of *Lincolnes-Inn*, upon the first *Sunday* of this *Michaelmas* Term.

By *JOHN TURNER*, late Fellow of *Christs-College* in *Cambridge*.

*Sic vive cum hominibus tanquam Deus videat, sic loquere cum Deo tanquam homines audiant.*

*LONDON*, Printed by *R. E.* for *W. Kettilby*, at the *Bishops-Head* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1683.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

# Sir George Jeffryes,

Knight and Baronet,

Lord Chief Justice of *England*, and one of His Majesties most Honourable PRIVY-COUNCIL.

My Lord,

THis little Performance, which would have courted you for a Patron had you still continued at the Bar, one of the best Advocates that ever pleaded there, now dreads and fears you sitting upon the Bench, where you have approved your self, by the extorted confession of your Enemies themselves, to be so just, and so impartial a Judge. But, my Lord, I know the

*obligingneſs and goodneſs of your Nature to be ſuch, that you can pardon, what you will not defend, and therefore I could not forbear taking this firſt occaſion, after having received ſo great a mark of your Favour, to lay my ſelf humbly at your Lordſhips feet, to pay my hearty and affectionate Acknowledgments for the great Obligation and Honour you have done me. It was an Obligation of the higheſt nature, becauſe I wanted a ſubſiſtence ſo much, and was in danger every day of encountring with greater difficulties than before: And it was an Honour ſo extraordinary, that nothing could be more; that your ſelf, and thoſe other Lords and Gentlemen in Commiſſion with you, ſhould give me ſo deſirable a Character, and ſo good a Preferment together; for it is plain, it was for my Loyalty and Affection to my Prince and Country, two Intereſts that are inſeparable from each other, that I was made the Object of your Choice, and therefore it would be very incongruous*

*grvous in me, if having withſtood the ſhock of the moſt miſerable Circumſtances, in a firm adherence to my Allegiance and Duty, I ſhould not now continue to the end, a perpetual Example of the moſt conſtant and entire Obedience, when Intereſt, Gratitude, and Inclination are in a triple League and Confederacy together.*

*I owed my Fellowſhip at* Chriſt-College, *to the Kings Royal Prerogative and Princely Favour, and it is to the ſame Royal Goodneſs, reflected from thoſe that act in Commiſſion from it, that I am now proud and ſafe in the Title and Advantage of* Hoſpitaller *of St.* Thomas; *ſo that the King hath now a double Title to my Studies and my Life, beſide that of my being his natural Subject and Servant, and it is ſtill a further Obligation upon me to conform to all the Inſtances of Loyalty and Obedience, that I may not diſappoint your Lordſhip and the reſt of the Commiſſioners, who have repoſed a confidence and expectation in me.* The

*The Subject here treated of, the Omnipresence of God, is of that universal influence upon all the Actions and Affairs of Humane Life, that if it were but duly and frequently attended to, there would be no need of the Pulpit or the Bar, and though there may be defects in the management and method, yet it happens very luckily in my discourse upon it, which was uttered when I did not think of that good Fortune which has since befallen me, that it will appear you have preferred a Protestant Divine, at a time when every thing but a Protestant Dissenter, that is, a Dissenter from the Established Protestant Religion, is by some branded with the Character of a Papist.*

*But, my Lord, you are wanted at* Westminster-Hall, *and I do rudely to detain your Lordship thus long, therefore I shall conclude with my Prayers to Almighty God, whose Providence, in so necessary a Juncture, hath placed a person of so much Prudence,*

*Learning,*

## The Dedication.

*Learning, Integrity, and Courage, in ſo high a Station, that he would aſſiſt and guide you by his wiſe and good Spirit in your great and difficult Affairs, and that you may go on with continuance and increaſe of Honour, to be eminently ſerviceable and uſeful to your Country, till you arrive, after a peaceful and vigorous Old Age, at thoſe bleſt Manſions of Eternal light, and reſt, and peace, which God hath prepared, as an encouragement and reward of Virtue, for all thoſe that Fear him, and Honour the King. I am, may it pleaſe Your Lordſhip,*

Your Lordſhips,

Moſt Humble, Obliged,

and Obedient Servant.

*John Turner.*

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## ERRATA, diſturbing the Senſe.

Page 27, for *employed* read *enſlaved*. p. 32. for *ſeaſonable* r. *reaſonable*.

# Pſal. CXXXIX. 7, 8, 9, 10.

*Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into heaven thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.*

AS there hath never yet been any Nation ſo barbarous, nor any People ſo ſtupid, as not to acknowledge the Exiſtence of a God, a Truth that ſhines with ſo much Evidence and Demonſtration, that blindneſs it ſelf can hardly be inſenſible of ſo glareing Brightneſs, and ſo piercing Light; ſo the great reaſon upon which all Ages have all along proceeded, in their acknowledgment of the Divine Exiſtence, hath been evermore taken from the conſideration of the works of Nature, and the *Phænomena* that were about them. For they conſidered, that the far greateſt part of this Univerſe being ſtupid and inſenſible, was in no capacity to order and diſpoſe it ſelf after ſo comely and regular a

manner, nor to preſerve it ſelf in ſo magnificent and beautiful a Structure, for ſo many Ages; and what was true of the whole Univerſe taken together, the ſame was true likewiſe of its ſeveral parts. Plants and Animals, and Minerals and Mettals, could not frame or organize themſelves, or one another; neither could the ſame Seed, by Virtue of any Power, or Wiſdom, or Contrivance which it had in it ſelf, be able ſo conſtantly to produce the ſame ſort of Herb, or Tree, or Flower. And as the obſervation of the whole Univerſe together, and of every part of it conſidered by it ſelf, did undeniably argue that there was ſome infinitely wiſe and underſtanding Nature, indued with Power and Goodneſs equal to his Wiſdom, by whom the whole Univerſe, and every part of it, was ſo ſtrangely, ſo wiſely, and ſo graciouſly contrived, or in the Language of the *Royal* Pſalmiſt, ſo *fearfully* and ſo *wonderfully made*; ſo the uſefulneſs and Friendly Conſpiracy of the ſeveral parts, for the ſupport and maintenance of each other, tho' in themſelves they were deſtitute of Counſel, and were incapable of any ſuch contrivance, was ſtill a further Evidence, a moſt unqueſtionable, invincible, and irrefragable demonſtration of an inviſible and immortal Being, by which all theſe things were adminiſtred and governed.

For to ſay that all theſe things came to be thus by

by chance, by the *Epicurean* jumbling of a raſh and inconſiderate Chaos; and that by the ſame Chance, by which they were firſt diſpoſed into ſo wiſe and orderly a Frame, they have continued as they are for ſo long a ſucceſſion of time, ever ſince before the *Theban* and the *Trojan* War; to affirm, as *Lucippus*, *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, and *Lucretius*, and the reſt of thoſe abſurd and ridiculous *Philoſophaſters* have done; that the Ear was not made for hearing, nor the Eye for ſeeing, nor the Noſe for ſmelling, nor the Feet for walking, nor any part or veſſel of the Humane Body, which are ſo vaſtly numerous, for the uſes for which they are ſo exquiſitely fitted, and that as they were made at firſt by chance, ſo they continue ſtill to be propagated by it, is to aſcribe not only Wiſdom but Conſtancy to Chance, both of which are perfectly incompetible, and inconſiſtent with its Nature.

And for the ſame reaſon that they concluded there was indeed ſuch a Being, as an Inviſible and Immortal God, they did likewiſe conclude him to be Omnipreſent, or infinitely extended over all his Works: For this is certain, that nothing can operate by any Power or Efficiency which is properly its own, where it is not preſent it ſelf; and therefore if the Divine Power, the Divine Goodneſs, the Divine Wiſdom be extended over all things, it follows unavoidably, that the Divine Subſtance,

in which theſe Attributes have their perpetual reſidence and abode, muſt be coextended to the Attributes themſelves, which is all that is meant by the Divine Omnipreſence; and to ſay that God can be preſent by any Virtue, or Power, or Efficacy of the Divine Nature, where the real and local ſubſtance of the Divinity is not, is to affirm Tranſubſtantiation with the *Papiſts*, or to deny motion with *Zeno*, or to ſay any thing which is never ſo abſurd with any other of the Philoſophers; as *Cicero* tells us, there is nothing ſo abſurd, which ſome Philoſopher or other hath not owned; and therefore when *Ariſtodemus* in *Xenophon* urged *Socrates* with this Objection, how it was poſſible for God, being but one, to manage and order all things both in Heaven and Earth; the Anſwer of *Socrates* to the Objection was this, Τοιοῦτον γὰρ τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον, ὥστ' ἅμα πάντα ἐφορᾶν, καὶ πάντα ἀκούειν καὶ ἅπασι χρῆναι παρεῖναι, καὶ ἅμα πάντων ἐπιμελεῖσθαι. That *God was ſo large and ſpacious a Being, that he could hear and ſee all things, and be preſent every where, and order every thing at the ſame time:* And it was the inward ſenſe and apprehenſion of this Divine Amplitude, and Omnipreſent Extention; an Extention not only of Attributes, but of Subſtance and of Nature, That made *David* utter ſuch Expreſſions as theſe, That *he covereth himſelf with Light as with a Garment, and ſtretcheth out the heavens like a Curtain*; That *he layeth the beams of his Chambers in the*

*Waters,*

*Waters, and maketh the Clouds his Chariot, and walk-eth upon the wings of the wind*; That *his way is in the Sea, and his paths in the great Waters, and his foot-ſteps are not known*; that is, his Immenſity is unbounded, and his Extention infinite; or in the words of my Text: *Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.*

From which words I ſhall not enter upon a Diſcourſe of the Divine Omnipreſence it ſelf, of which all that is fit for a Sermon hath been already ſpoken, and which cannot eaſily be called in queſtion, without queſtioning at the ſame time the Exiſtence of a God, which hath a neceſſary connexion with it; but I ſhall chuſe rather to entertain your attention at this time, with an Enquiry into the natural Reſults and Conſequences of this Doctrine, which if they had been either ſo throughly underſtood, or ſo heedfully regarded as they ought to be, the manners of the world would always have been better, than ever yet they have been known to be, and the Religion more pure and reaſonable than it is even at preſent, I do not ſay in ſome parts of the world, but in ſome parts of Chriſtendom it ſelf, which is

ſo,

ſo far from being truly Chriſtian, that ſetting aſide that light which the Goſpel hath afforded, it falls very ſhort of the Religion of Nature.

And the firſt Conſequence which I ſhall mention ſhall be this, That if it be true that God is a Subſtance infinitely extended, that he is preſent to all things, and that *in him*, to uſe the language of the *Apoſtle*, that is, in the large comprehenſion of the Divine Space or Subſtance, *we live and move, and have our being*, then this ought to be a moſt powerful Argument and Motive to us, to behave our ſelves always as if we were truly ſenſible of his preſence in the midſt of us, with reverence, and ſobriety, and godly fear, with a dutiful regard both of him and of our ſelves; to live ſo as if we were always immediately to dye, as if we believed, what is ſo plainly, ſo demonſtrably true, that the Judge is always at the door, and that he may immediately place himſelf upon his dreadful Tribunal, to ſummon us before him to give an account of our ſelves.

And indeed, what can be more impious, more impudently wicked, than for us to abuſe our ſelves, or one another, in the preſence of him that made us, to corrupt and debauch our Faculties and our Natures, in the preſence of him that gave them, and intended them for better uſes? What more ungrateful than to diſoblige him, as it were before his

his Face, with all the aggravating Circumſtances of Defiance and Contempt, who is ſo kind, ſo merciful, and ſo gracious to us, that we are upheld by his Mercy, and ſupported by his Arm, which is mighty to ſave, at that very time when we offend againſt him? What more fooliſh, than to provoke him who is ſo Powerful and ſo Juſt, ſo able to execute the utmoſt Vengeance, and ſo concerned for the happineſs of Mankind, and for the good Order and Government of the World, that he muſt needs have a very deep, and a very affecting reſentment of all our Perſonal and Political Vices, of the Offences which we commit againſt our ſelves, and of thoſe acts of Injuſtice, Treachery, Cruelty, or Diſobedience, which are committed againſt the Peace and Quiet of the World? His Goodneſs appears ſo plainly in all the parts of the ſenſible Creation, and it is ſo evident to Sence, *that his mercy is over all his works*, that he muſt degenerate very much from himſelf, and muſt lay by his Care and Concern for the Happineſs of his Creatures, before he can ſuffer any wicked Action, or any bad Example, which is not heartily Repented of, to go unpuniſhed; and therefore it is a very fooliſh and inconſiderate Practice of the Sons of Men, to *ſet themſelves ſo fully to do Evil, becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed*; For the *Wiſe man* aſſures us in the very next words, That *though*

*a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged*, that though he be not immediatly taken off in the midſt of his ſins, *yet ſurely I know that it ſhall be well with them that fear God, but it ſhall not be well with the wicked, neither ſhall he prolong his days, which are as a ſhadow, becauſe he feareth not before God*; that is, being in his preſence he feareth him not.

It is indeed an Argument of a merciful and compaſſionate Being, that he ſpares when he might puniſh, and that he gives us further opportunities of Repentance and Amendment, when he might immediately take the forfeiture of our Sins; but either we muſt think that there is no ſuch thing as Juſtice in his Nature, which yet diſcovers it ſelf by a thouſand remarkable inſtances of his Providence, in the Government of the World, as clearly and as fully as his Goodneſs does; or elſe we muſt unavoidably conclude, that the longer we continue in the willful practice of any known ſin, the greater is the Provocation which is given to it, to exert it ſelf with Uſury and Increaſe of Vengeance, to make up what was wanting in the ſpeed of Puniſhment, by the ſeverity of it.

Nay, in truth, if he were not Juſt he could not be Good; for the puniſhment of Offenders is a warning to Repentance, and an exhortation to Virtue; it is intended for the good of thoſe that

are

ate spared, and is in some sense the greatest instance of Mercy that can possibly be given; whereas to let the World run at sixes and sevens, to make no distinction betwixt the Innocent and the Guilty, is but to give a publick Licence to Mankind, to destroy and ruin themselves and one another, which is the greatest Cruelty that can be conceived; therefore God Almighty, as he hath annexed Natural Punishments of Poverty, Diseases and Disgrace to every thing that hath the Nature or the Notion of sin, so he does sometimes visit us by a particular Judgment, and makes it plain to all the World, by an unexpected turn of his Providence, that his hand is upon us, and that his Almighty Arm is stretched out against us; for which reason it was that *David*, though at sometimes his Faith were shocked and startled; *his Feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipt; and he was envious at the foolish, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked*; yet at other times when he considered more maturely, when he laid all things together, and weighed the whole Circumference of things in a Just and Impartial Ballance, he could pronounce with abundance of Confidence, and with a well grounded Certainty and Assurance, That *God shall wound the head of his Enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness.*

And this hath been in all Ages so generally observ'd, and so constantly believed by wise men, that God does sometimes interpose himself by a particular Judgment, for the punishment of sinful men, and that the slowness of his Justice is not to be interpreted as an Argument of the uncertainty of it, or of his disregard of Humane Actions and Affairs, that their Writings are full of Expressions to this purpose: *Plutarch* hath written an entire Treatise upon this Argument, which he stiles *De Sera Numinis Vindicta:* And *Horace* makes it a general Observation which seldom or never fails,

*——Raro antecedentem scelestum*
*Deseruit pede pœna claudo.*

And *Claudian* in his Invective against *Rufinus*, introduces himself at first questioning the Providence of God, and his Care of Humane Affairs, because he saw such Miscreants as *Rufinus* was living in so great prosperity and splendour.

*Sæpe mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem,*
*Curavent superi terras, an nullus inesset*
*Rector, & incerto fluerent mortalia casu.*

And then he gives the Reasons of his doubt, that on the one hand he was tempted to believe a Providence, because of the regular and orderly motions of the Stars, the constant return of the Seasons of the year, and such other things as seem to look as if they were managed by an orderly, wise, and under-

understanding Nature, but then when he considered the prosperity of wicked men, and the afflictions and calamities to which the good and virtuous were frequently exposed, he then began to waver in his Opinion, and to encline to the Sentiments of the *Epicureans*, who affirmed all things to have come by Chance.

*——Rursum labefacta cadebat*
*Religio, causæq; viam non sponte sequebar*
*Alterius, vacuo quæ currere semina motu*
*Affirmat, magnumq; novas per inane figuras*
*Fortuna non arte regi.*

But then when at last he saw *Rufinus* punished, and that Justice had overtaken him, and called him to account for all the Oppression and Villany of his wicked life, he then crys out in a triumphant manner, that now indeed he did in good earnest believe there were such Beings as the Immortal Gods, and that they had a tender and compassionate regard to the happiness of men.

*Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum,*
*Absolvitq; Deos——*

And to this purpose it is what *Serapis* in the Epigram is represented, as discoursing to a Murtherer in his Dream.

Ἀνδροφόνῳ βαθὺν πρὸς τοιχίον ὑπνοῦντι,
Νυκτὸς ὀπισθεν φανὶ Σαράπιν ὄναρ,
Καὶ χρησμωδῆσαι, καταχείμενος ὕπτος ἀνέστω,
Καὶ κοιμῶ μεταβὰς, ὦ τάλας ἀλλαχόθι.

He was advised by his Dream to remove from the place where he lay asleep, for that the wall he lay under was rotten, and would immediately fall upon him; at which the man smiling, and pleased within himself, began to applaud himself in the memory of his wickedness, as thinking the Gods were pleased with Murtherers, and had a kindness for Cruelty and Bloodshed. *No*, said *Serapis*, *you are mistaken for that, it is not out of kindness to you, but to the world, that this warning was given, that you may be made a more publick and notorious Example.*

Neither was it only the opinion of the wiser sort, but all the world have generally believed, that great Offenders have ever been punished by a Divine Justice, which will at length infallibly overtake them, as the Inhabitants of *Melita* or *Malta*, when the Viper came out of the fire and fastened upon St. *Paul*'s hand, *they said among themselves*, Acts 28. 4. *no doubt this man is a Murtherer, whom though he hath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live.* And it was with allusion to this received Opinion among the *Jews* and other Nations, that our *Saviour* expostulates with those that brought him the news of the *Galileans*, whose blood *Pilate* had mingled with their Sacrifices, *Suppose ye that these* Galileans *were sinners above all the* Galileans, *because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except*

ye

*ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh: Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and ſlew them, think ye that they were ſinners above all men that dwelt in* Jeruſalem? *I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

This was the Reaſon of the Diſciples Queſtion concerning the man that was born blind: *Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his Parents, that he was born blind?* And ſo in the great Tempeſt when *Jonah* was on board the Ship, the Mariners preſently concluded that there was ſome grievous ſinner on board their Veſſel, who was the cauſe of the danger they were in, and therefore *they ſaid every one unto his fellow, come and let us caſt lots, that we may know for whoſe cauſe this evil is upon us.* Which they had no ſooner done, but the lot fell upon *Jonah*, and it appeared plainly by the ſequel of the ſtory, that it was for his ſake the Tempeſt was raiſed: And upon the ſame account it is that *Horace* declares that he did not think it ſafe to go in the ſame Ship with a prophane or ſacrilegious perſon.

*——— vetabo qui cereris ſacrum*
*Vulgarit Arcanæ ſub iiſdem*
*Sit trabibus, fragilemq; mecum*
*Solvat Phaſelum.*

To conclude, they did not only believe that God by his Judgments did purſue the wicked, and at ſome time or other certainly overtake them, but alſo that by a like miraculous Power he did ſometimes

times interpoſe himſelf for the preſervation of Innocence in the midſt of danger. So *Martial* ſaid very wittily and very wiſely of an Houſe that fell down after ſo ſtrange a manner, that a perſon who then hapned to be in it got no harm, and was not buried in its ruines, *ſtantia non poterant tecta probare Deum, an Houſe that had ſtood firm, with the ſame perſon in it, would not have proved the exiſtence of a God.*

And this is the firſt thing, that the Conſideration of the Divine Omnipreſence ſhould put us in mind of his Providence and of his Juſtice which are founded upon it; and that it ſhould make us the more careful to pleaſe him, and to obey his Laws, who is preſent to all our actions, and intimately twiſted into all our thoughts, who is a perpetual witneſs of our behaviour here, and will be the terrible Judge of it hereafter. Neither ought it only to deter us from publick and open tranſgreſſions, ſuch as are committed in the view of the world, and in the face of the Sun, but we ought alſo to remember, in the language of the *Pſalmiſt*, that *he hath ſet our ſecret ſins in the light of his countenance*; or in that of the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, that *he is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight: but all things are naked and open in the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* And therefore we ought

ought to pray with holy *David*, that God would keep us from *secret*, as well as from *presumptuous* sins. Nay, indeed if in this case there were to be any difference in the zeal and fervency of our Prayer to God, it ought rather to be greater that he would preserve us from the former, than the latter, because by being concealed from the notice of the world, there is the less danger of any temporal disadvantage from them, and so the temptation to commit them is the stronger; and another thing that is to be considered, is, that though it may be thought a sign of some Grace, a symptom of Modesty, and a token of Shame, for a man to manage his wickedness in the dark; and indeed there is this to be said for him, that he is not so hurtful to the world by his Example, yet this must be acknowledged as an aggravating Circumstance of the most private sensuality, and of the most secret and undiscerned injustice, that it proceeds upon an Atheistical Principle, such a man hath not God always before his Eyes, or else *he saith in his heart there is no God*, he wishes there were none, and he is willing to believe there is none; otherwise certainly he would consider with himself, that the presence of God, and of an accusing Conscience, that are Witnesses to his action, is more than that of an hundred thousand Spectators; he would consider that to do an unreasonable or a sinful thing, is either to act upon

supposition that God is not by, which is the next thing to the denyal of his Existence; or upon supposition that he will pardon it, which is to sin against him, and reproach him to his face, for a too easie and good natur'd Being at the same time, or it includes an utter and an absolute denyal of the Divine Existence, and a defiance to his Power and Justice, than which no greater, nor more unpardonable or provoking sin can possibly be committed.

And certainly, if we shrink away, and are ashamed of our selves, when we are taken napping by a mortal man like our selves, a man whose breath is in his nostrils, who carries the same appetites, the same desires, the same infirmities about him that we do, and who may possibly be guilty of the same or a like wickedness which he hath detected and discovered in us; a man against whom our Offence is not committed, a man who seeing our frailty ought to reflect upon his own, and who cannot punish our wickedness as it deserves, how much more ought we to dread the presence of the most high God, who is immediately affronted by us, whose Majesty is so great, and his Justice so impartial, and his Power so irresistible?

But secondly, The Consideration of the Divine Omnipresence or Infinite Extention, ought to fill us with such awful and majestick Notions of God, with

ſuch large and ſpacious apprehenſions of his nature, as are not only the moſt noble Object of Humane Contemplation that it can poſſibly pitch upon, but will, when duly attended to, create in us a ſuitable love of his immenſe goodneſs, and fear of his uncontroulable power, and admiration of his infinite wiſdom, and veneration for his unbiaſs'd and impartial Juſtice. We ought always to behave our ſelves like virtuous and good men, becauſe we are always in the Divine Preſence; and it is certain we ſhall behave our ſelves ſo much the better, if we conſider diſtinctly whoſe preſence that is, it is the preſence of him that is all in all, that filleth all things, and is preſent to all the poſſibilities of the moſt unbounded ſpace; it is he, who being every where, governs all things after a ſtrange and incomprehenſible manner, he that is as good as he is great, as wiſe as he is good, as juſt as he is wiſe, as powerful as he is juſt, he whoſe infinity diſcovers an amazing deal, but hides a much greater part of his immenſe Majeſty, his vaſt, unlimited, and unbounded Nature.

It is impoſſible for us when we conſider theſe things with a wiſely and attentive mind, not to love and fear him, not to praiſe, magnifie, worſhip and adore him, not to humble our ſelves before his mighty Throne, and fall down low on our knees before his Footſtool. And it was this immenſe

amplitude of the Divine Extenſion, which *Aratus* made to be the very reaſon and ground of all Religious Worſhip, as indeed it is,

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα· τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἄνδρες ἐῶμεν
Ἄρρητον, μεσταὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαὶ
Πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραὶ μεστὴ τε θάλασσα,
Καὶ λιμένες πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες.

*Let us begin with God*, ſaid he, *whom we mortals ought never to forget, for all the Streets and Markets, all the paſſages aud avenues of Cities, the Sea and the Sea Ports, are all of them fill'd with God, and we ſtand in need of him every moment:* And then follows that paſſage which St *Paul* hath cited out of him, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν, *for we alſo are his offspring:* And in imitation of *Aratus*, a *Latin* Poet hath expreſt himſelf in the ſame manner,

*A Jove principium Muſæ, Jovis omnia plena.*

But, Thirdly, a third practical Inference which may be deducible from the Conſideration of the Divine Extenſion, is, that we are not to make our application to *Angels* or to *Saints*, as Mediators or Interceſſors with God on our behalf; for what need we any ſuch to deliver our Meſſage, when he who alone is able to grant our Petition is united and twiſted into our very thoughts at the ſame time when we ask it; and how incongruous would it be, when we are in the Kings preſence, and in his

his hearing, to entreat another to ſupplicate in our behalfs, when we are there our ſelves, which is as much as to intimate that his Majeſty would have more regard to the perſon of the Petitioner, than to the reaſonableneſs of the Petition, or to the Circumſtances of the perſon in whoſe behalf it was made; beſides that, we have no reaſon to believe that either the Angels or the Saints departed are privy to our thoughts, or that they concern themſelves (any otherwiſe than as the firſt of theſe are ſometimes employed by God to be his miniſtring Spirits) about any Humane Affairs. We are ſure they are but finite Spirits, and conſequently they cannot be preſent at all places at once, and this makes it very ſuſpicious, conſidering the immenſity of the Univerſal Space, beſides that the Seat of all the glorified Spirits is generally agreed to be at ſo great a diſtance, that for both of theſe reaſons they are too far from us to be able to hear what we ſay, or to be preſent to our thoughts and wiſhes, in order to preſent them before the Throne of God.

Neither does it help the matter, what ſome of the Schoolmen have been pleaſed to tell us, that the Saints behold the Prayers and the Neceſſities of their Votaries below in the Beatifical Viſion, or in the face of the Divine Glory, which they fancy like a Glaſs wherein the Wants and Miſeries of the

Creatures may be ſeen, for it is plain that this is a very dull and heavy Imagination, and very unworthy the Majeſty of God; beſides that if he did not only know, as he does, the wants of all his Creatures, but if they had made ſuch deep impreſſions and ſignatures upon his Nature, it would be great impiety to urge him any further, when of himſelf he had taken ſuch particular cognizance of the deſires and wants of all his Creatures; but it is ſtill more deteſtable, in the Practice of the Church of *Rome*, that ſo long a Beadroll of Saints ſhall be invoked by a Rabble of Worſhippers in a ſolemn Proceſſion, as if neither they nor God could be prevailed upon without abundance of importunity and clamour.

A man would think that place of the *Coloſſians* might have been a ſufficient Antidote, for the Church of *Rome*, to preſerve her from the poyſon of this fooliſh Hereſie; *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worſhiping of Angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly pufft up in his fleſhly mind.* For if the worſhip of *Angels* be forbidden, who are a Superiour ſort of Creatures, that are ſuppoſed to have a more familiar correſpondence and a nigher acceſs to their Maker, then certainly that of *Saints* or Souls departed is much more, eſpecially if we conſider, that the *Angels* being ſent ſo frequently, as they are in Scripture, upon a Divine

vine Meſſage, they might be thought the fitter Inſtruments to convey a Meſſage back again from whence they came; nay, the Chriſtian Religion allows us, to believe that men have their Angels in heaven, that do in general intercede for them at the Throne of God, though it is ſtill to be doubted, whether they have any particular knowledge of of our wants. For ſo our Saviour tells us, *Matth.* 18. 10. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little Ones; For, I ſay unto you, that in heaven their Angels do alwaies behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven.* And the *Cherubims* in the Sanctuary being placed upon the Ark of the Teſtimony, and looking upon the Divine Glory and Majeſty that ſat between them, is an Argument that the *Jews* had an opinion, and ſuch an opinion as was authorized by God himſelf, that the *Angels* did make interceſſion in the preſence of God on the behalf of men.

But yet it is true, that we are not to apply our ſelves to the *Angels*, though they ſhould be allowed to intercede for us; it is true likewiſe that they are not made miſerable by a particular view of our Calamities and Misfortunes, neither do they make any particular Interceſſion, but they are kind and charitable Spirits that wiſh well to all mankind, and that Interceſſion which they make is only a general thing, that God would haſten to accompliſh the number of his Elect, and that his Kingdom

dom may come, and his Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Laſtly, it is ſtill true, that there is but *one Mediatour between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus*, that is, he is the proper Object of our Prayers and Interceſſions, and it is he alone that Mediates in Virute of that Sacrifice which he hath made of himſelf, as the High Prieſt did in the moſt Holy Place for all the Congregation of *Iſrael* upon the ſolemn day of Expiation.

Nay, perhaps after all, by *Angels* in that place of the *Coloſſians*, the departed Spirits of the Saints may be underſtood; for in this Senſe the word ſeems to be underſtood, *Acts* 12. 15. Where *Peter* being looſed out of Priſon, knocked at the door of *Mary* the Mother of *John*, and when the Maid went in and told how *Peter* ſtood at the Gate, *they ſaid unto her, thou art mad*, becauſe they knew *Peter* was in Priſon, and therefore they lookt upon it as an impoſſible thing: But when ſhe conſtanly affirmed that it was he, *then ſaid they, it is his Angel*, that is, as I ſuppoſe, his Ghoſt, or his departed Spirit, concluding that *Peter* had died, or had been put to death in Priſon. So alſo, *Acts* 23. 8. *The Sadduces ſay, that there is no Reſurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both:* By which it is plain, that there are but *two* things mentioned, for the word *both* cannot be extended to more, one of them is the *Reſurrection*, and the other is the *Angel* or *Spirit*, which

which in this place it ſeems are *Synonymous* terms to ſignifie the ſame thing, and comprehending at once both the *Angelick Forms* and the *Spirits* of men departed out of this mortal Life.

I know indeeed that there is another poſſible expoſition of this place, which hath not yet been hit upon by any Interpreter, no more than this which I have laſt mentioned concerning the Souls of men departed, but at preſent it is not for my purpoſe to inſiſt upon it; and it is certain that the Council of *Laodicea*, who, as *Theodoret* informs us, condemned the Worſhip of *Angels* from the authority of this place, underſtood it in the moſt plain and obvious ſenſe in which we uſually underſtand the word, and in this ſenſe it proves with a ſtill greater force and evidence againſt the *Romiſh* Superſtition, *Angels* being ſtill a more noble Order of Beings; and if it be not lawful to worſhip them, it is much leſs lawful to pay our Devotions to any Saints departed, however pious and exemplary they may have been, and much leſs to thoſe that have been Canoniz'd for Money, or for Treaſon, and owe their Saintſhip to their Friends on the one hand, and which is ſtill more horrid and deteſtable, to their Crimes and Villanies on the other, who are preferred to Heaven for diſturbing the Earth, and mounted into the bleſſed Regions of light, and peace, and love, as the reward of ſtrife,

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diſobedience, hatred and contention, and every evil work.

But without being beholding to the teſtimony of this place, which yet may ſerve for a ſufficient proof againſt the *Romiſh* Idolatry and Superſtition, we may appeal to that paſſage of *Peter* with reſpect to *Cornelius*, and of *Paul* and *Barnabas* with relation to the Inhabitants of *Lyſtra*, who would not ſuffer themſelves by any means to be worſhipped, meerly for that reaſon, becauſe they were *men*; ſo that it ſeems, unleſs they lay down their *humane nature* at the time of their departure, that is, unleſs the Saints departed ceaſe to be themſelves, they cannot be Objects of Divine Worſhip. But we are ſure that God hears our Prayers, and that he is able to anſwer them, and that he is every where preſent, as it were on purpoſe that he might firſt know our wants and then relieve them, and we may approach his preſence with confidence in the Language of the *Prophet*, whatever becomes of that gainful *Hierarchy* of the *Romiſh Saints* and *Angels*, who pay the *Prieſts* well, for the worſhip of the *People*, *Doubtleſs, thou art our Father, though* Abraham *be ignorant of us and* Iſrael *acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy Name is from Everlaſting.*

Fourthly, by a reflexion upon this univerſal Extenſion of the Divine Nature, the worſhip of *Images* repre-

repreſenting God the *Father*, *Son*, or *Holy Ghoſt*, or the Bleſſed *Trinity* taken together, which hath been practiſed frequently in the Church of *Rome*, is manifeſtly condemned: For beſides the meanneſs of the Repreſentation, that he that made all things ſhould be repreſented by an Image made with hands; that he whoſe Nature is inviſible, ſhould be repreſented by a Carved Image, or a Painted Reſemblance of that which the Scripture declares to have no Shape nor Appearance; that he who is Infinite ſhould be drawn in little upon a Wall or a Window; that he who is all Life, and Power, and Wiſdom, ſhould be repreſented by that which is ſenſeleſs, dull, and unactive, by that which knows nothing, and is next kin to nothing; I ſay, beſides this, it is abſurd to repreſent him as it were by Proxy, who is preſent and in the midſt of us himſelf; neither is it ſufficient to ſay in this caſe, that his Subſtance being inviſible, and not to be diſcerned by mortal Eyes, or humane Senſes, there is therefore need of a *ſenſible Memorandum*, although the Worſhip be terminated in himſelf; for at this rate all the Idolatry of the Heathen World may be excuſed, for no man is ſo ſenſeleſs to believe their Worſhip was terminated in a Stick or a Stone, at leaſt we ought not to believe it without very good Proof, and if it could be proved, yet even this would be parallel'd in the Church of *Rome*, where

they pray to the Crucifix of Wood or Stone as well as to Christ himself, and attribute as much satisfaction and expiation to it, as they do to the blood of their crucified Redeemer, as appears undeniably from the *Romish* Missals which are extant at this day, and may at any time be produced against them.

Fifthly, upon the same account of the Divine Extension, we are excused from all the *Romish Pilgrimages* to *Jerusalem*, and *Loretto*, and *Canterbury*, and *Compostella*, and other places, for as to the Sepulchre of our Saviour at *Jerusalem*, if they could certainly assign the place where he lay, which it is more than probable they cannot do, yet what signifies the Sepulchre when the body is not there? or if it were; yet I hope, a dead Carcase is not a fit Object of Divine Worship and Honour; and as for the Shrines and Reliques of the Saints, certainly it must needs be gross Idolatry to worship them, when it is so plainly unlawful to do it to the glorified Spirits of the Saints themselves.

The Saints cannot be worshipped without dishonour to God, who challenges all our Worship and Adoration, and God is alwayes present with us, so we need not undertake a long and costly that Journey to find him out; and wherever God is, there *Christ* is also; *he is in the Father, and the Father in him*, and they two are one and the same; and this is the great mischief which Idolatry and Superstition

ſtition do, they take our minds off from him who is the only true Object of Worſhip, in the contemplation of whoſe Nature there is the moſt perfect ſatisfaction, and the trueſt pleaſure, who is the moſt ſuitable and worthy Object of our fear and hope, our love, and admiration, and deſire, and who is infinitely the moſt noble, and the moſt perfect Pattern of our Imitation; and inſtead of this, our minds are employed to a few ridiculous Rites, and imaginary Expiations, as if any thing but a ſight and ſenſe of our ſin, a dutiful and awful apprehenſion of that Majeſty and Goodneſs which we have offended, were able to reconcile us to God, or to reinſtate us in his Grace and Favour, who will not accept the Sacrifice of Fools, and the vain ſhews of bigotry and ſuperſtition, without the obedience of a reaſonable, and the repentance of an humble and a contrite ſoul.

Sixthly, by a due and ſerious reflexion upon this Doctrine, we may abſolve our ſelves from any obligation to the *Romiſh* Auſterities and Mortifications, becauſe as the Divine Subſtance, ſo alſo are his Attributes, his Mercy, and his Goodneſs extended over all his Works: And it appears plainly, not only by the appetites, which we find about us, which may be innocently gratified, as well as from the proviſion which is made for their enjoyment, that God did not expect we ſhould make our ſelves

miſerable by a perpetual abſtinence and ſelf-denial, but we are to make the intereſt of Virtue and the honour of Religion, the meaſure of our abſtinence and enjoyment in theſe Caſes. There muſt be a prudence and a temperance in all things, and ſo St. *Paul* tells us, *Every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things*; and that he *kept under his body, and brought it into ſubjection: leſt that by any means when he had preached to others he himſelf ſhould be a caſt away.* But in another place he tells us expreſly, ſpeaking of the painful and unnatural mortifications of ſome in thoſe times, ſuch as were ſome among the *Phariſees*, and the *Eſſenes*, and ſuch as followed the ſevere Diſcipline of the Sons of *Jonadab* the Son of *Recab*, and ſome no doubt, that pretended to be Chriſtians likewiſe, that *bodily exerciſe profiteth nothing, but godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having the promiſe of the Life that now is*, that is, it is conſiſtent with a ſober and moderate enjoyment of our ſelves, *and of that which is to come:* And in the beginning of that Chapter, he tells us, that *the Spirit ſpake expreſly, that in the latter times ſome ſhould depart from the Faith, giving heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils*, that is, Doctrines exhorting to the Worſhip of *Demons*, or *Angels*, or *departed Spirits*, *ſpeaking Lies in Hypocriſie, having their Conſciences ſeared with an hot Iron:* The very Picture of the *Jeſuites*

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at this day, who do not only practiſe, but defend in their Writings, the Doctrine of *Equivocation*; and then it follows, *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats:* And who they are that do both of thoſe things at this time of the day, we underſtand very well. And indeed if we conſider the unreaſonable Auſterities of ſome of the *Religious*, as they are called, abroad, a man would be enclined to think they were not the Diſciples of *Jeſus*, but of *John*; and that they took part with the *Baptiſt* againſt the *Meſſias*, accuſing him, as his Enemies the *Jews* were wont to do, that he was *a glutton and a wine-bibber, and a friend of Publicans and ſinners:* And it is obſervable, that though *John* the *Baptiſt* were a great Example of Abſtinence himſelf, yet it does not appear that he enjoined any ſuch thing to his Followers and Diſciples; but on the contrary, every man was admitted to the Baptiſm of *John*, upon the ſole and only Condition of Repentance, and was as to other things, ſo far as was conſiſtent with Virtue and with Prudence, left to be guided by his Conſtitution, and by the Circumſtances of his Life and Fortune.

Seventhly, By a due Reflexion upon the Divine Extenſion, we ſhall be excuſed from the ſhame and inconvenience of *auricular Confeſſion*, as it is practiſed in the Church of *Rome* at this day, for God does

does not expect that we ſhould make a particular confeſſion of our ſins to men, the conſequence of which is only to make our ſelves uneaſie in the company of thoſe to whom we have confeſſed; to run an apparent hazzard of being undone in many caſes, by Knaves for intereſt, or by Fools out of levity, inconſtancy, and a blabbing humour; and indeed I know nothing that it can be good for, but to let men, that have nothing to do to pry into ſuch matters, into the ſecrets of Families, and to put our ſelves perfectly at the Mercy of a Prieſt, who will ſometimes be treacherous as well as other men; beſides, that inſtead of keeping up a wholſom Diſcipline, it is the way to corrupt it, and tends to the debauching both Layety and Clergy, in as many ways as there are ſins to be committed, when the Confeſſor and the Penitent begin to diſcover and underſtand one another: But we are obliged in the preſence of men to make a general Confeſſion, and we are in our thoughts, as we go along, to apply that general Confeſſion to our particular ſins; and before God, who is a Witneſs and a Spectator of our evil ways, who is ſo intimately preſent to all our thoughts and actions, that it is to no purpoſe to think of concealing any thing from him, we are to bewail and bemoan our ſelves in a moſt particular manner, we muſt humble our ſelves before him in ſackcloth and aſhes, by laying

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our ſins at the Footſtool of his Mercy, with all their aggravations, beſeeching him moſt humbly, with a ſorrowful and broken heart, to pardon us for what is paſt, and to aſſiſt us with his preventing Grace for the time to come; that we may no longer abuſe our ſelves, and do deſpite to ſo merciful and ſo gracious a God.

In the Eighth place, The Conſideration of the Divine Omnipreſence and Extenſion, ought to fill us with chearfulneſs and courage in all our troubles and adverſities whenſoever they oppreſs us; it ought to give us a full confidence and aſſurance in his Providence, which where ever we are is always hovering with wings of mercy and compaſſion over us, that is, always at hand, and is a ready help in the needful time of trouble, that is never far off in a day of adverſity, or in a time of danger, but is always *nigh to them that call upon him, yea to all ſuch as call upon him faithfully.*

Or if he do not ſee it fit or expedient to remove our trouble, to eaſe us of our pain, to prevent our danger, and to inſtate us in a full poſſeſſion of peace, and reſt, and ſafety, we are then in the Ninth and laſt place, to Conſider, That a Being of ſo great Goodneſs, and ſo tender Mercies, as all his Works diſcover him to be, would not ſuffer us to be tormented, when we are not conſcious to our ſelves of any heinous Guilt, or when we are, after

after an hearty and ſincere Repentance, but that there is a Scene of Happineſs behind, which as yet we do not ſee; that he deſigns by this Calamity, compared with the innocence of our lives, or the ſincerity of our repentance, and the goodneſs of his Nature, to give us a ſeaſonable proſpect of a bleſſed Immortality in another and a better ſtate, wherein *theſe light afflictions that are but for a moment, ſhall be made ſufficient recompence and amends for, by a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of glory.*

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## *FINIS.*

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